Evidence Synthesis Infrastructure Collaborative (ESIC) planning process:
Interim Report

Global SDG Synthesis Coalition (GSDGSC)

Building a Global Evidence Synthesis Community (BGESC)

Pan-African Collective for Evidence (PACE)

Center for Rapid Evidence Synthesis (ACRES)

| Working group 1: **Demand-side engagement** | Stage 4a report: **Demand-side engagement options** | Last updated: **20 May 2025** | Consultation window: **26-30 May2025** |

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The [Evidence Synthesis Infrastructure Collaborative](#) (ESIC) aims to strengthen the global evidence ecosystem by making evidence synthesis more accessible, timely, relevant, and trusted for decision-makers and end-users.

This Stage 4a report, developed by Working Group 1 on Demand-Side Engagement, refines and prioritises options for enhancing engagement with evidence users across sectors and regions. Drawing from prior assessments and consultations, the report presents regional secretariats, intermediary support, and co-design labs function as interconnected components addressing different levels of the evidence ecosystem:

1. **System-Level: Regional Demand-Side Secretariats** – These governance structures can provide coordinated oversight and legitimacy, ensuring cross-sectoral learning and responsiveness to evidence needs.

2. **Mid-Level: Support to Intermediaries** – Strengthening capacity-building efforts enhances the ability of evidence intermediaries to bridge gaps between producers and end-users, making evidence more accessible and actionable.

3. **Local-Level: Co-Design Labs** – Frontline engagement spaces that facilitate direct collaboration between researchers, policymakers, and citizens, ensuring evidence is relevant and effectively integrated into decision-making.

The remaining options of offering **small grants to evidence intermediaries and end users** and **developing repositories of priority themes or questions** can be used as flexible local options or developed as capability is embedded as key actions within the above options.

The report recommends a two-track approach to implementation:

- A regional call for partners to identify established actors who can strengthen or expand demand-side engagement efforts drawing from regions and sectors with strong existing expertise.

- Targeted investment in new or emerging 'bodies' where sectoral interest is high, but capability remains weak, requiring operational funding and capacity-building efforts.

This approach also responds to persistent disparities between sectors, recognising that while areas like health and development have formalised systems and evidence intermediaries, others such as the environment, education, and humanitarian response require foundational investments to engage effectively with synthesis processes.

Stage 4b will focus on costing the proposed options, leading to a final report (Stage 5) for review in Cape Town in June 2025, where stakeholders will finalize investment strategies for scaling demand-side engagement globally.

Background to the work

The Evidence Synthesis Infrastructure Collaborative (ESIC) has been established to support decision-makers and evidence users to have timely, relevant, trustworthy, accessible, and affordable evidence syntheses across different geographical regions, sectors and disciplines. This six-month planning process (from January to June 2025) seeks to engage with the 'demand' and 'supply' sides of evidence as well as evidence intermediaries and funders. ESIC Working Group 1 (Demand-Side Engagement) is focusing on **how to support producers and potential users of evidence synthesis work to better communicate about, and meet, user needs** – see Box 1.

Box 1. Goals of Working Group 1

The goal of this work is to determine what a high functioning demand-side would look like for the evidence synthesis ecosystem. The end-state we are striving for is:

"Evidence users are supported and enabled to leverage high quality, up-to-date and rigorous evidence syntheses to improve the likelihood that their decisions and practice are consistently informed by the most current and robust evidence available."

To help describe this idea in action – (from the perspective of an end-user) the newly improved evidence synthesis ecosystem would be markedly more responsive, accessible, and empowering. Getting started would be easier by reaching out to (or being contacted by) trusted local evidence synthesis hubs, which would assist policymakers, practitioners and citizens navigate available evidence resources and connect with the right expertise. Evidence intermediaries would offer implementation support and would ensure that these connections are seamless, translating complex syntheses into clear, actionable guidance tailored to policy contexts.

New platforms and innovative ways of bringing experts, users and citizens together would actively help shape the framing of synthesis questions, ensuring outputs are directly relevant to their needs. And ideas would be captured, curated, and shared making it faster and easier to commission new syntheses or adapt existing work.

The pathway to date

This report (Stage 4) draws from the insights gained in Stages 1, 2 and 3 of this work. Stage 1 explored gaps in the ecosystem, Stage 2 looked at maturity assessment of capabilities needed to address these gaps, and Stage 3 introduced some options/solutions to improve demand-side engagement. Stage 4 now seeks to refine and prioritise these options to support the drafting of a final report for consideration in Cape Town in late June 2025.

Based on feedback from internal partners in ESIC and external interest holders, WG1 reviewed options to ensure nothing had been missed at this vital stage. Accordingly, Stage 4 work consisted of a joint internal/external interactive workshop to test potential options, then prioritise those options identified. This process was further refined by surveying working group members, using an impact assessment. This report responds to the feedback received and presents the outcomes from the prioritisation assessments. It then seeks to offer insights for moving forwards with new investments.

What we learned from Stage 3 and ongoing issues to consider

The Stage 3 consultation invited working group members and external interest holders to assess a set of five proposed options for improving demand-side engagement in the global evidence synthesis ecosystem – see **Box 2**. This section summarises the key points raised and identifies issues and ideas that have recurred through the various rounds of feedback.

Box 2. Options from Stage 3	
Option 1	**Establish regional demand-side secretariats** – decentralised coordination bodies focused on localised evidence synthesis engagement.
Option 2	**Provide implementation support to evidence intermediaries** – capacity-building efforts to strengthen intermediaries in connecting evidence with end-users.
Option 3	**Create co-design labs** – collaborative spaces for researchers, policymakers, and stakeholders to co-produce evidence and solutions.
Option 4	**Develop question repositories or banks** – structured platforms to bridge demand-side actors and evidence synthesisers through shared policy questions (to be expanded to themes and evidence gap mapping)
Option 5	**Provide grants to end-users** – flexible funding mechanisms to support the integration of evidence synthesis into policymaking and other decision-making processes.

There is a strength in having complementary and modular options

Feedback supported the idea of implementing the five options in a modular or complementary way, rather than as discrete or competing models. This view also aligned with a notion that Options 1, 2 and 3 (Regional Secretariats, Intermediary Support, Co-Design Labs) are mutually reinforcing components. For example, regional secretariats could serve as system-level governance structures, while intermediary support provides mid-level capacity and co-design labs enable frontline engagement. This promotes adaptability and the potential for sequencing based on readiness in different sectors and regions.

There is a positive focus on equity and regional representation

Respondents welcomed the report's emphasis on engaging under-represented sectors and regions. However, some noted risks of geographic exclusion or uneven uptake if regional or sectoral disparities are not actively addressed. Feedback called for clarification on how support for marginalised actors will be sustained over time, particularly in light of shifting political and funding environments. There was also support for building on existing regional mechanisms, such as UN collaborative platforms, existing intermediaries, and regional evidence communities, to ensure political legitimacy and continuity.

Some sectors, eager for support, do not have the maturity of existing players

A strong and recurring theme in the feedback concerned the need to account for differences in evidence synthesis maturity across sectors. While fields like health and social sciences often benefit from formal intermediaries and established synthesis infrastructure, other domains – such as environment, education, housing, gender and humanitarian response – may lack comparable systems. They often operate with limited infrastructure and face systemic barriers to evidence use. Sectoral inequity is as critical as regional disparity in shaping demand-side engagement.

As such, strategies that work well in one domain may not translate effectively to another. Several contributors recommended explicitly recognising these disparities and tailoring or sequencing options to reflect both regional and sectoral variation. However, others felt that options did not sufficiently account for capabilities of existing intermediaries and networks.

The definition and clarification of end-users continues to spark discussion

Respondents highlighted nuances in the end-users identified, noting the varied roles played by government actors, multilateral or bilateral decision-makers, and embedded evidence support units (such as in policy units and UN evaluation offices). These actors often operate with distinct mandates, incentives, and institutional access.

Understanding these differences is critical to designing fit-for-purpose engagement models and governance arrangements. These distinctions will be of increased importance as mechanisms are designed to leverage and support players – with some bodies having potential to be an organisational anchor (host or supporter of work), while also serving roles as producer of evidence and evidence user (see also next section).

Gaps, emerging actors, and the role of existing intermediaries

While the Stage 3 feedback acknowledged the value of working with existing intermediaries – many of whom bring deep sectoral expertise, trusted networks, and institutional memory – it also highlighted important gaps across the evidence synthesis system. Not all regions or sectors benefit from well-established intermediary infrastructure, and the quality, focus, and inclusiveness of existing organisations vary significantly.

Several emerging actors expressed a clear appetite for greater support to build or formalise their intermediary roles, particularly in underrepresented domains such as environment, education, and local governance and in marginalised, resource-constrained regions. These groups are often striving to bring innovative practices to end-users, but lack access to sustained funding, mentorship, or formal recognition to advance their work. Without targeted sector-specific investment and mentoring, even committed actors within these fields may struggle to access or adapt synthesis outputs, widening the evidence-use gap and reinforcing sectoral imbalances.

It was also observed that some existing actors may have an implicit interest in preserving their influence within the current system. While such dynamics are not unexpected in any maturing

field, they underline the importance of placing equity at the forefront by ensuring that support mechanisms are open, inclusive, and intentionally designed to foster new entrants.

In this context, a balanced strategy is needed – one that leverages the strengths of existing organisations while also creating space for new players to emerge, specifically in under-represented regions and sectors Innovations such as regional secretariats or open intermediary networks may provide the enabling infrastructure to achieve both.

Broadening scope for question repositories

Option 4 (question repositories) attracted mixed views. While the concept was seen as promising, concerns were raised about its reliance on academic modes of question formulation. Several respondents suggested reframing the model as a repository of broad priority themes, which could later be refined into answerable synthesis questions through co-production processes.

Additionally, it was recommended to include evidence gap mapping, enabling the demand side to review existing evidence in their area of interest and submit any unaddressed questions for the question bank. This would make the model more responsive to how real-world policy priorities are typically shaped – through negotiation, political context, or crisis response.

Implications of feedback for Stage 4

Capturing Variability and Demand-Side Complexity

The feedback underscored the importance of managing differences across sectors and geographies. End-users differ in their awareness of evidence synthesis methods, access to primary data, and institutional readiness to use evidence. These differences shape not only their capacity to engage but also their patterns of evidence-seeking behaviour. Any future design or implementation must accommodate this complexity.

Balancing Central Support with Local Flexibility

Stakeholders emphasised the need for centralised frameworks and guidance – particularly for capacity-building among intermediaries – while also promoting local ownership. A hybrid approach that includes generic tools adaptable to specific contexts was recommended. This could include modular toolkits or repositories, supported by global standards and peer learning platforms linked with other WGs.

Sequencing and Governance

Finally, several respondents called for clearer articulation of sequencing logic – i.e., which options should be prioritised first, and under what conditions. Questions also emerged around governance – what structures will oversee these options, how trade-offs between investment areas will be managed, and what prioritisation criteria will be applied. These are key design issues for Stage 4 which are addressed in the final section.

Assessment of Options in Stage 4

WG1 applied two assessment approaches of options in Stage 4 work. The first relied on polling and a group discussion of the drivers behind their decisions. The polls examined

various criteria including impact, effort, equity, legitimacy, and value. This exercise also included an ordinal ranking of options from best to worst – before and after discussion. The second assessment directly addressed the effort and impact dimensions, which have been applied across all working groups.

In each approach the number of responses was limited to available participants and restricted by the timeframes. These results should therefore be considered as indicative. The approach is probably most useful for exploring the reasoning behind decisions and understanding how certain considerations should inform decisions.

Polling of preferred options against key criteria showed broad support across options

Participants in the polling (n=20) represented nine nations and multiple sectors. When asked about choosing one option which have the greatest impact for their work, participants generally described actions which aligned with existing options. The options suggested included:
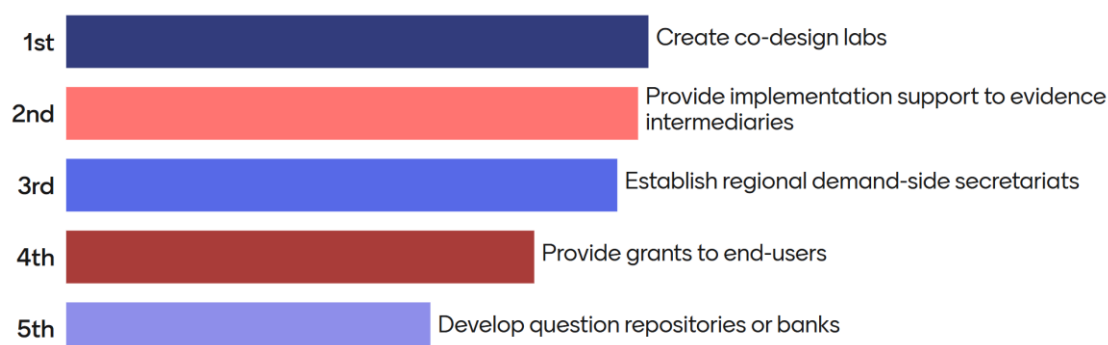
    i.   Funding and infrastructure for evidence intermediaries (Option 1, 2 and 5)
    ii.   Capacity building and knowledge translation (Option 1 and 2)
   iii.   Policymaker engagement and decision-making support (Option 3, 4 and 5)
   iv.   Sector-specific evidence integration (Option 2 and 3)
    v.   Demand-side awareness and engagement (Option 1 and 2)
   vi.   Policy contexts and evidence utilisation (Option 3 and 4)
  vii.   Priority setting and strategic influence (Option 4)

When polled on which option best met key criteria (impact, effort, equity, legitimacy, and value) results were generally evenly spread. Exceptions were:

- Option 1 (regional secretariats) polled strongly in equity (14 votes – coming first) and weakly in effort and impact (4 votes each)
- Option 2 (intermediary support) polled very strongly in equity (14 votes – coming first)
- Option 3 (co-design labs) polled evenly and well across all criteria
- Option 4 (question repositories) polled poorly in equity (2 votes) and legitimacy (4 votes)
- Option 5 (grants) polled well in all criteria except legitimacy (4 votes)

The ordinal ranking provided interesting results when compared to the individual criteria. Pre and post discussion, participants ranked Options 1 to 3 as their top three each time, and Options 4 and 5 as last both times. However, the first and third positions swapped between rankings with Option 1 and Option 2 swapping places. Option 2 (support for intermediaries) was ranked as the best option in the final poll – see **figure 1**.

Figure 1. Final ranking of options – participants asked to rank options from best to worst

1st	Create co-design labs
2nd	Provide implementation support to evidence intermediaries
3rd	Establish regional demand-side secretariats
4th	Provide grants to end-users
5th	Develop question repositories or banks

These results were consistent with some Feedback from Stage 3 in suggesting that Options 1, 2 and 3 were complementary and would be supportive of a system view of enhancing demand-side engagement. Namely that these could be seen as components of a layered architecture of support:

- **System-level governance** through Regional Secretariats
- **Mid-level intermediation** via targeted support structures and
- **Frontline engagement** through co-design mechanisms.

Effort and impact analysis

The results of the survey conducted among working group members, which aimed to assess "impact"—defined as the magnitude of the benefits derived from the implementation of an option— largely confirmed the ranking generated from the polls conducted during the workshop with external partners (see table below).

Table 1: Impact assessments

Option	Impact Ranking	Key Considerations
1. Regional Secretariats	3rd (Avg: 7.4)	Valuable for coordination in setting up new or coordinating existing players. Favored if seeking long-term system-level change.
2. Support to Intermediaries	1st (Avg: 8.6)	Most favored overall. Strengthens actors closest to users; seen as feasible and high-return.
3. Co-Design Labs	2nd (Avg: 7.9)	Strong for innovation and collaboration. Needs facilitation and sustained investment.
4. Question Repositories	5th (Avg: 6.2)	Needs to be tied to existing connections accessed by end-users and link to policy cycles and embedded processes.
5. End-User Grants	4th (Avg: 6.9)	Useful for localised experimentation an applicable with limited existing infrastructure.

The analysis concludes that Options 1, 2, and 3 are suitable for investment as they serve as complementary and scale-relevant interventions to support demand-side engagement. Options 4 and 5 are likely to be sound complementary approaches that could be applied to enhance certain modes of engagement (early-stage prioritisation and question planning), and flexible and readily implementable approached to local support.

How to invest in demand-side engagement work – implementation

In line with the Stage 4 report from other working groups, this section takes the options as discussed and examines their needs for implementation across four key areas - organisational / governance, infrastructure, projects, and processes. While many options span multiple areas, each has a primary implementation anchor. This framing supports sequencing, alignment with other Working Group recommendations, and identification of enabling conditions.

Options requiring organisational or governance changes

Regional Demand-Side Secretariats are primarily a governance intervention. Successful implementation depends on establishing formal regional entities with mandates to coordinate demand-side engagement. These bodies may be hosted by, or alongside, credible organisations (e.g., UN regional bodies, or with regional intermediaries or think tanks) or established as new bodies (aligned with other governing needs of working groups). The choice here will depend on the maturity, willingness and readiness of these existing organisations.

A central coordination mechanism or function may be needed to connect secretariats, support standard-setting, and facilitate shared learning. The functions of the secretariats could be guided by local, multi-disciplinary boards. The staffing for the secretariats could come from newly funded staff, or in-kind contributions from local actors for limited tasks. The secretariats themselves could serve as capability building tools for seconded staff.

Options requiring or establishing new infrastructure

Thematic Repositories (including question banks and evidence gap mapping) – This option is fundamentally a digital infrastructure investment supported by a method or process for generating the information to be captured and shared. It involves developing an interactive platform that curates, updates, and links priority policy questions to synthesis processes. Implementation requires significant coordination, data governance, and technical expertise, and may need to integrate with tools from WG2 and WG3 (e.g., evidence platforms, living syntheses).

To succeed, this platform must be user-centred, regionally relevant, and linked to institutional processes for question setting. Given its complexity, development should begin in parallel with early-stage options but launch later, once intermediary capacity and engagement pathways are in place.

Options to be delivered as projects – time limited or task and product focused

Co-Design Labs are project-based innovations focused on solving complex problems through collaborative synthesis. They require flexible hosting arrangements – such as universities, think tanks, or government innovation units – and are best implemented as time-limited, outcome-oriented initiatives. These labs may require some infrastructure (e.g., facilitation tools) and strong process design but can be delivered as discrete projects with mechanisms to gather feedback over time.

Given their ability to generate early value, multi-stakeholder relations and end-user engagement, co-design labs can serve as both proof-of-concept and vehicles for experimentation. They are well-suited for medium-term implementation, ideally after initial capacity-building for evidence intermediaries.

Grants to End-Users are a project funding mechanism designed to catalyse local experimentation in evidence use. They have relatively low organisational, or infrastructure demands but requires transparent fund administration, equity-focused criteria, and mechanisms to synthesise and share learnings from grantees. Grant-funded activities are time-bound, making this an agile entry point for fostering innovation and demand-side engagement. They should also be tied to an established knowledge need / high priority and targeted to those who cannot fund activities in other ways.

Grants are a strong candidate for early implementation, particularly in regions or sectors lacking formal intermediaries. They may also uncover local champions and inform future institutional investments.

Options focused on processes – actions or activities

Implementation Support to Intermediaries – The core of this option lies in building and strengthening the capabilities of evidence intermediaries and growing the number of intermediaries. This requires structured, ongoing processes – training, mentoring, peer learning, and technical assistance and match-making of experts across sectors. A central or regional coordinating hub may support quality control, training development, mentorship alignment, and community of practice facilitation.

Because this option enhances system-wide capacity and supports other options, it should be prioritised for early implementation. Process-based investments here could act as enablers for broader engagement strategies.

Making investment decisions

Investment decisions in demand-side engagement must be strategically aligned with sectoral needs, regional priorities, and the maturity of evidence synthesis providers and end-users. The options outlined in this report present distinct pathways for strengthening the ecosystem, but their successful implementation requires careful consideration on when, where, and how much to invest.

Critical Decision Points for Investors

Investors must weigh several key factors when determining the most effective allocation of resources:

1. **Regional needs and sectoral gaps**

Evidence synthesis maturity varies widely across different sectors and regions. Established domains such as public health and social sciences often have well-developed intermediaries, while emerging areas like environmental governance, education, and local policymaking require foundational investments. Investors must evaluate regional evidence landscapes and identify sectors where targeted support will yield the greatest systemic improvements.

2. **Equity as a core consideration**

Any investment framework must ensure inclusivity, avoiding the risk of reinforcing existing disparities. Equity should shape funding priorities, ensuring resources reach underrepresented regions and sectors, enabling marginalised voices to participate in evidence synthesis and decision-making. Flexible funding models – including grants for end-users – can support localised experimentation and foster diverse approaches to evidence integration.

3. **Leveraging existing actors vs. creating new institutions**

Investment choices must balance enhancing existing capacity with establishing new infrastructure where necessary. Some options, such as regional demand-side secretariats, may benefit from anchoring within existing governance structures like evidence networks. Others, like co-design labs, could work to a defined methodology (commissioned by a secretariat or done as work of intermediary support) and then be supported or hosted by local organisations. Where none are available, but local interest is high, support for new organisations may be needed to facilitate collaborative engagement.

4. **Scaling implementation based on readiness**

The maturity of evidence intermediaries and end-users (policymakers, practitioners, civil society) will determine the feasibility of specific interventions. In regions with limited evidence synthesis capabilities, foundational investments in capacity-building and implementation support should precede complex initiatives like thematic repositories. Phased implementation can help ensure interventions are context-appropriate and adaptable.

5. **The role of the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)**

The SDGs may provide an overarching framework for assessing readiness, sector maturity, and demand-side engagement needs. Investors can use the SDGs as a lens for identifying priority areas, aligning interventions with global development agendas, and ensuring funding supports sustainable, impact-driven change. Their role post-2030 should be monitored.

Two paths forwards?

To ensure demand-side engagement mechanisms evolve effectively, a two-track approach can balance immediate capacity with long-term development. The first track would identify

capable and willing local actors in sectors where demand-side engagement skills are already sound, enabling them to pilot and promote activities in new domains. This process could operate through a regional call for partners, inviting institutions with relevant expertise to co-develop engagement models. A central coordinating secretariat could manage this process, ensuring alignment with evidence synthesis priorities and facilitating cross-learning among selected partners.

The second track would focus on building capabilities in areas where demand-side interest is strong but institutional maturity is weak. This approach would require targeted investment in new bodies, alongside operational funding to support evidence intermediaries and local engagement activities. Strategic interventions – such as mentorship, embedded fellowships, and tailored training programs – would help cultivate expertise in these emerging sectors. Both tracks could operate as pilot initiatives, allowing for refinement and expansion of demand-side supports over the next three years, ultimately shaping a scalable model for regional and sectoral inclusion in evidence synthesis governance.

The next steps from here

After consulting on this report (Stage 4a), we will assess the costs of these proposals and guide resource allocation (Stage 4b). The final report (Stage 5) will compile findings for discussion at the Cape Town meeting in June 2025, where stakeholders will finalise investment strategies for improving the evidence synthesis ecosystem.

This is a pivotal moment for shaping a more inclusive, balanced global ecosystem. The decisions made in Cape Town will determine whether all sectors and regions can benefit – or whether existing disparities will persist."

Appendix 1 – Glossary of terms

This brief list includes key terms used in the report, defined in simple and plain language to clarify their intended meaning. More comprehensive definitions can be found in earlier reports. Additionally, some links are included for broader discussions of these terms. See, in particular, the Demand-side engagement [Stage 2 Report](#).

Evidence Intermediaries
Entities or individuals that operate between decision-makers and evidence producers, facilitating the use of evidence in decision-making processes. ([McMaster Health Forum](#))

End-Users
Individuals or groups who apply research findings in real-world contexts, such as policymakers, practitioners, organisational leaders, or the public.

Evidence Synthesis
The process of systematically combining information from multiple studies to provide a comprehensive understanding of a particular topic. ([Cochrane](#))

Co-Design Labs
Collaborative spaces where researchers, policymakers, and stakeholders jointly develop and apply evidence to address specific policy or practice challenges.

Question Repositories
Structured platforms that collect and organize policy-relevant questions to guide evidence synthesis efforts.

Demand-Side Actors
Synonym to end-users (above) often used to contrast with supply-side actors (below): Interest holders who seek and use evidence to inform their decisions, including policymakers, practitioners, and the public.

Supply-Side Actors
Researchers and institutions that produce evidence intended for use by decision-makers and practitioners including primary research, systemic reviews and evidence synthesizers.

Evidence Ecosystem
The interconnected network of individuals, organizations, and processes involved in the production, translation, and use of evidence in decision-making.

Evidence Support Units
Organizations or teams that provide assistance in accessing, interpreting, and applying evidence to inform decisions.

Appendix 2 – Roadmap Integration table: Comparative overview of options

Problem	Solution Name	Type of Solution	Why Is It Innovative?	Expected Outcome	Success/Destination	Synergies
Fragmented and inconsistent coordination of evidence use across geographies; lack of localised governance for demand-side engagement.	Regional Demand-Side Secretariats	(a) Evidence synthesis infrastructure	Avoids overly centralised and bureaucratic models in favour of a decentralised, context-sensitive coordination structure; enables regional tailoring and cross-learning.	Improved coordination, equity, and local responsiveness in how evidence is used for policy. Better alignment between global priorities and regional decision-making. Supports policy actors and intermediaries in underserved regions.	*By end 2028, at least 4 regional secretariats operational, each with a multi-stakeholder board, shared learning platforms, and demonstrated uptake of synthesis in national policies.*	Potential alignment with governance models supportive of various functions proposed by other working groups. Demand-side work could exist within or alongside other secretariat functions
Weak capacity of intermediaries to translate, contextualise, and communicate synthesis to end-users. Inconsistent quality and access across regions/sectors.	Provide Implementation Support to Intermediaries	(b) Evidence synthesis process	Shifts focus from producers or end-users to "in-between" actors, offering structured support and professionalisation. Highly scalable and cost-effective.	Stronger intermediary ecosystem across sectors, improved translation of synthesis into actionable insights, faster uptake by decision-makers. Benefits policymakers, civil servants, NGOs, and researchers.	*By end 2026, 30+ intermediaries trained or supported; quality standards adopted across 3 major sectors; increased demand-side engagement metrics reported in funded regions.*	WG2 Regional training modules and networks – some complementary functions; WG2 Sout-South mentorship – could exist as tool for support; WG4 tools for translating to local context;
End-users often excluded from question-framing and evidence development; outputs not tailored to policy realities or public needs.	Create Co-Design Labs	(b) Evidence synthesis process / (c) Projects	Embeds co-production at the centre of synthesis. Cross-sectoral collaboration tools that enhances relevance and legitimacy. Can be adapted across issues and geographies.	Increased ownership and uptake of synthesis outputs, especially in complex or emergent policy areas. Benefits researchers, policymakers, and community stakeholders.	*By end 2026, 15 active labs events with measurable outputs (e.g., syntheses commissioned, policy tools developed); 80% of participants report improved relevance and collaboration.*	WG3 grants to ensure tools are shared also focuses on user-centred, and equitable implementation.
Disconnect between policy questions and synthesis outputs; duplication of efforts; lack of visibility on shared priorities across systems.	Develop Thematic Repositories (incl. question banks)	(a) Evidence synthesis infrastructure	Provides a transparent, shared interface between demand and supply sides. Could be linked with AI and real-time evidence platforms. Enhances coordination and reuse of synthesis.	More timely and targeted synthesis outputs; decreased duplication; increased engagement in priority-setting by policymakers and communities.	*By end 2026, 1 operational repository globally with in 1-2 regional or sectors being established; minimum 100 curated questions, 15 co-produced syntheses launched; regular user feedback integrated.*	WG5 Living Horizon and Environmental Scanning may overlap with some operational aspects of the repositories; Other repositories different purpose (WG2 living evidence repository; WG4 evidence repository)
Limited resources for end-users to apply evidence synthesis in real-time decision-making; lack of experimentation or innovation at point of use.	Provide Grants to End-Users	(c) Projects	Shifts control and experimentation to demand-side actors. Allows bottom-up innovation and embedded practice of synthesis use.	Greater evidence use in real-world contexts. Encourages diversity of approaches and empowers actors in low-capacity or underserved areas. Especially useful for local governments, CSOs, or front-line implementers.	*By end 2027, 50+ micro-grants awarded; evidence-informed policies adopted in 15+ institutions; learning from grant-funded pilots synthesised and shared.*	WG5 Global Synthesis Innovation Fund – may link with WG1 activity grants to end users